

1. In a minivan adapted for wheelchair access by a folding ramp having one end attached to the minivan by a hinge, a drive mechanism including a drive motor having a rotor shaft coupled to said folding ramp for raising or lowering the ramp by rotating one end of the folding ramp about said hinge, the improvement comprising:

said drive mechanism is located beneath the floor of the minivan.

2. The minivan as set forth in claim 1 wherein said drive mechanism includes:
a reduction gear having an input coupled to the rotor shaft and having an output shaft;

a drive shaft coupled to said output shaft.

3. The minivan as set forth in claim 2 wherein said drive shaft includes at least one lever arm attached to said shaft and coupled to said folding ramp for rotating the ramp about said hinge.

4. The minivan as set forth in claim 2 and further including a position sensing switch coupled to said drive shaft for interrupting power to said electric motor at a predetermined position of said ramp when the ramp is being extended.

5. The minivan as set forth in claim 4, wherein said drive shaft can drive said motor and further including

a heat dissipating load;

a braking switch for switching current from said motor to said heat dissipating load, thereby dynamically braking the folding ramp during extension.

6. The minivan as set forth in claim 2 wherein said drive shaft is supported by at least two sets of bearings.

7. The minivan as set forth in claim 2, wherein said drive shaft can drive said motor and further including

a heat dissipating load;

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a braking switch for switching current from said motor to said heat dissipating load, thereby dynamically braking the folding ramp.

8. The minivan as set forth in claim 7 wherein said load brakes the fall of the ramp while the ramp is extended without applying power to said motor.

9. The minivan as set forth in claim 8 wherein said load includes a resistor for dissipating current generated by said motor.

10. The minivan as set forth in claim 9 and further including a diode in series with said resistor for blocking current through said resistor when said ramp is raised and the motor is driven in the opposite direction from when the ramp is lowered.
